

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7696
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2244

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MARR PGOV LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER HOSS SEEKS CLARIFICATION REGARDING
TIMETABLE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. AMBASSADOR SAYS HE IS CONFIDENT
ISRAELIS WILL WITHDRAW BUT THAT WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE SPEEDED UP BY
PRESENCE LEBANESE ARMY ON THE GROUND AND SOLUTION HADDAD QUESTION.
SUGGESTED BEST WAY TO SOLVE LATTER WOULD BE THROUGH DIRECT CON-
TACT BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE. HOSS SAYS HE HAS TOLD ARAFAT
PLO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN TO ITS FORMER POSITIONS IN THE
PART OF SOUTH LEBANON THAT WAS OCCUPIED BY ISRAELIS. HE SUGGESTS
ALTERNATE SOLUTION MAY BE MODIFIED SHTAURA ACCORD WHICH WOULD
PROVIDE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE AT VARIOUS POINTS OUTSIDE AREA
ISRAELIS HAVE OCCUPIED.

2. CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HOSS AT HIS REQUEST 0900 APRIL 20.
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CALL WAS TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON
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AND PROSPECTS FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. I SAID I WAS CONFIDENT
ISRAELIS WERE GOING TO WITHDRAW BUT WAS A LITTLE CONFUSED AS
BETWEEN THIS MORNING'S PRESS REPORTS AND LAST WORDS WE HAD HAD
FROM JERUSALEM AND TEL AVIA AS TO EXACTLY WHAT TIMING WOULD BE.

WE HAD BEEN PRESSING ISRAELIS TO WITHDRAW COMPLETELY BY END OF
APRIL BUT IT WAS NOW BECOMING CLEAR THAT THEY WERE NOT GOING TO

MEET THAT DEADLINE. NEVERTHELESS, I THOUGHT WITHDRAWAL WAS MATTER OF WEEKS AND DAYS RATHER THAN MONTHS. HOSS SEEMED PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO HEAR THIS.

3. I SAID SITUATION WAS VERY COMPLEX AND THERE WERE MANY ISSUES INVOLVED BUT THERE WERE TWO IN PARTICULAR WHICH SEEMED TO ME TO HOLD KEY TO SITUATION. ISRAELIS WERE NOT GOING TO WITHDRAW UNLESS THEY HAD SOME ASSURANCE PALESTINIANS WERE NOT GOING TO REOCCUPY THE POSITIONS THEY (THE ISRAELIS) WERE VACATING. THEY COULD GET THIS ASSURANCE IF UNIFIL WAS IN OCCUPATION AND HAD SHOWN ITS ABILITY TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER KEY POINTS. ISRAELIS, HOWEVER, DID NOT HAVE GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES AND WOULD MUCH PREFER TO SEE CREDIBLE LEBANESE FORCE ON THE GROUND. THEY THOUGHT LEBANESE WOULD BE BETTER THAN UNIFIL AT PREVENTING PALESTINIAN RETURN AND INFILTRATION. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE HAD BEEN PUSHING LEBANESE TO SEND ARMY TO SOUTH. THEIR DOING SO WOULD HASTEN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. THEIR NOT DOING SO WOULD SLOW IT DOWN AND INCREASE RELUCTANCE OF DONORS TO MAINTAIN THEIR TROOPS IN THE AREA. WE REALIZED PROBLEMS LEBANESE ARMY HAD BUT THOUGHT AT MINIMUM THEY SHOULD TRY TO GET THREE SYMBOLIC COMPANIES ON THE GROUND.

4. FIRST QUESTION THEN WAS LEBANESE ABILITY SEND TROOPS TO SOUTH. CONNECTED WITH THIS WAS ATTITUDE OF PALESTINIANS. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT ARAFAT HAD INFORMED WALDHEIM PLO WOULD NOT OPPOSE PASSAGE OF LEBANESE ARMY BUT THAT LEFTIST FORCES IN SOUTH WERE LIKELY TO
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OPPOSE IT BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT IT MARONITE DOMINATED AND I GATHERED THIS HAD BEEN MAJOR FACTOR IN PERSUADING PRESIDENT SARKIS NOT TO SEND TROOPS AT THIS TIME.

5. SECOND QUESTION WAS THAT OF FUTURE OF HADDAD AND CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES. I DID NOT THINK THIS PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED SHORT OF DIRECT HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE. WE WERE PREPARED TO PASS ANY MESSAGES LEBANESE MIGHT WISH TO SEND, TO TRY TO MAKE ARGUMENTS FOR THEM AND TO HELP THEM IN ANY WAY WE COULD, BUT IN FINAL ANALYSIS ISRAELIS WERE NOT REALLY GOING TO BE CONFIDENT REGARDING TREATMENT OF HADDAD UNLESS THEY HAD DIRECT UNDERTAKINGS FROM LEBANESE. I THOUGHT LEBANESE PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER HADDAD AND TO AMALGAMATE HIS TROOPS INTO LEBANESE ARMY WAS SENSIBLE SOLUTION. THIS WOULD REQUIRE, HOWEVER, PRESENCE OF LEBANESE ARMY IN THE SOUTH, WHICH IN TURN WAS CONNECTED TO PALESTINIAN AND LEFTIST ATTITUDES.

6. RESOLVING THESE INTERCONNECTED PROBLEMS LOOKED DIFFICULT. I THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT IT SEEMED TO ME ESSENTIAL STEP WOULD HAVE TO BE LEBANESE AGREEMENT TO MEET WITH ISRAELIS WITHIN CONTEXT OF ILMAC. OTHERWISE PROBLEM LIKELY TO DRAG ON FOR A LONG TIME AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE DELAYED.

7. HOSS COMMENTED WE WERE IN CHICKEN AND EGG SITUATION. HE FRANKLY HAD BEEN AMONG THOSE WHO HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT SENDING ARMY TO SOUTH PRIOR TO RESOLUTION OF HADDAD PROBLEM. HE THOUGHT ESSENTIAL POINT WAS THAT HADDAD NOT GET SPECIAL TREATMENT. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF OFFICERS WHOSE PERFORMANCES HAD PUT THEM IN QUESTIONABLE CATEGORY. MOST MUSLIMS REGARDED HADDAD AS A TRAITOR. CHRISTIANS REGARDED PEOPLE LIKE AHMED KHATIB AS TRAITORS. THERE WERE PERHAPS TWELVE OR MORE OFFICERS WHO COULD BE PUT IN THIS CATEGORY AND NONE SHOULD BE SINGLED OUT FOR PUNISHMENT OR PRAISE. THEY SHOULD ALL BE TREATED THE SAME. IF ALL WERE TO BE DISMISSED FROM THE ARMY OR ALL TO BE SENT ABROAD, OR ALL TO BE GIVEN NEW JOBS, OR ALL TO BE PUT IN PRISON, THAT WOULD BE A WORKABLE SOLUTION, BUT IF OTHERS WERE PUNISHED AND HADDAD WAS NOT, THAT WOULD CAUSE GRAVE
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PROBLEMS.

8. THERE WAS CURRENT IMPRESSION AMONG MUSLIMS THAT IF ARMY ENTERED SOUTH BEFORE HADDAD WAS TRANSFERRED, IT WAS GOING IN TO COOPERATE WITH HADDAD. THEREFORE, FUTURE OF HADDAD SHOULD BE SETTLED FIRST. I SAID THIS APPROACH WAS REASONABLE AND THAT LEBANESE SHOULD DISCUSS IT WITH ISRAELIS.

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9. WITH REGARD TO PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES, HOSS SAID HE HAD SEEN ARAFAT ON FRIDAY BEFORE PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION 425 AND TOLD HIM DIRECTION THINGS WERE TAKING AT UN. HE SAID THIS WOULD MEAN THAT ISRAELIS WOULD WITHDRAW ONLY TO TURN THEIR POSITIONS OVER TO UN TROOPS OR LEBANESE ARMY. THEY WOULD NOT TURN THEM OVER TO PALESTINIANS. THIS MEANT PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO FACT THEY WOULD NOT BE RETURNING TO THEIR FORMER POSITIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON. THEY WOULD HAVE TO START THINKING IN OTHER TERMS. IT ALSO MEANT THAT LEBANESE ARMY WOULD HAVE TO TRANSIT TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY PALESTINIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE TO PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNICATIONS ZONE THAT WAS WIDE ENOUGH TO ASSURE SECURITY OF LEBANESE ARMY. HE THOUGHT ARAFAT UNDERSTOOD THESE POINTS.

10. HOSS SAID THAT TO OPEN UP AT THIS POINT QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN EVACUATION OF TYRE, BEAUFORT ETC. WOULD OPEN ENTIRE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE, WHICH LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT BEEN WILLING TO DISCUSS GIVEN PRESENT LACK OF NATIONAL CONSENSUS. HE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH ARAFAT, HOWEVER, AND HAD MADE PRIVATE SUGGESTION THAT SOLUTION TO ARMED PALESTINIAN
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PRESENCE AND QUESTION OF SOUTH COULD PERHAPS TAKE FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SHTAURA AGREEMENT MODIFIED TO REFLECT NEW CIRCUMSTANCES AND WITHOUT ACTUALLY CALLING IT SUCH. BY MODIFICATION HE MEANT THAT THOSE POINTS SOUTH OF LITANI WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN BY ISRAELIS AND WHICH WERE TO HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED BY PALESTINIANS UNDER SHTAURO AGREEMENT WOULD NOT REVERT TO PALESTINIANS. PALESTINIANS WOULD HOWEVER BE PERMITTED TO HAVE REDUCED ARMED PRESENCE IN THOSE PLACES LISTED UNDER THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT, AND PERHAPS SOME OTHERS, THAT WERE OUTSIDE THE AREA OCCUPIED BY THE ISRAELIS. (THIS WOULD MEAN PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE IN CAMPS AROUND TYRE AND OTHER POINTS TO BE DESIGNATED NORTH OF LITANI.) THIS SOLUTION COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BY LEBANESE ALONE, HOWEVER. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE IN THE ARAB CONTEXT AND OTHER ARAB STATES WOULD HAVE TO COOPERATE. (IMPLICATION IS THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE UNDERSTOOD, AS IN ORIGINAL SHTAURA AGREEMENT, THAT SOME OF ARMED PALESTINIANS WOULD GO TO SYRIA AND PERHAPS OTHER PLACES.)

11. HE NOTED THAT SYRIAN ATTITUDE WAS VERY IMPORTANT. HE HIMSELF HAD RAISED WITH SYRIANS QUESTIONS OF THEIR MOVING DOWN TO LITANI. ASSAD HAS RESPONDED VERY BRUSQUELY THAT HE COULD NOT BE SEEN TO BE TAKING STEPS TO HELP AGGRESSORS. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ASSAD'S ATTITUDE WOULD CHANGE ONCE THE ISRAELIS HAD WITHDRAWN OR ONCE HE HAD SEEN TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL. THAT WOULD ALSO CHANGE PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES, HE THOUGHT, BECAUSE NEITHER PALESTINIANS NOR SYRIANS WERE NOW CONVINCED

ISRAELIS WERE GOING TO LEAVE.

12. COMMENT. BECAUSE OF THE CABINET RESIGNATION I AM NOT CALLING ON PRESIDENT SARKIS THIS AFTERNOON OR ANY TIME IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS IR I CAN HELP IT. SUCH A CALL IS LIKELY TO BE MISCONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO DICTATE CHOICE OF NEW PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET. SAME APPLIES FOR MY SEEING BOUTROS.

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ABOVE WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO BE IT ON SOUTH LEBANON FOR THE MOMENT. HOSS' REMARKS ARE INTERESTING AND INDICATE BOTH COMPLEXITY OF PROBLEM AND POSSIBILITIES FOR SOLUTION. AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT, WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY THE LINE THAT HADDAD ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED BY DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN LEBANESE AND ISRAELIS. IF, HOWEVER, ISRAELIS ARE THINKING, AS SIILASVUO SAYS THEY ARE, IN TERMS OF DISCUSSING OPEN BORDER, I FEAR THERE IS NO PROSPECT OF SUCH A MEETING. IF THAT THEREBY MEANS HADDAD QUESTION WILL NOT BE RESOLVED, I SUSPECT IT MEANS NO FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SOUTH. LEBANESE, PARTICULARLY AT THIS INSTANT, ARE NOT IN POSITION TO ACCEPT EVEN PRAGMATIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN OPEN BORDER. THEY CAN CLOSE THEIR EYES TO WHAT HAPPENS UNDER JURISDICTION OF UNIFIL BUT CANNOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACQUIESCENCE IN IT DIRECTLY.

13. WITH REGARD QUESTION OF MORE GENDARMES RAISED IN PARA 4 STATE 101005, I THINK WE ARE UNLIKELY GET ANY DECISION IN THIS RESPECT UNTIL AFTER NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED. AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, BOUTROS INDICATED WILLINGNESS THINK IN TERMS SENDING MORE GENDARMES DURING OUR APRIL 18 DISCUSSION. FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT GOL CAPABILITIES IN THIS RESPECT ARE SEVERELY LIMITED. MINISTER OF INTERIOR SALMAN WENT ON AT GREAT LENGTH MORNING OF 18TH ABOUT PROBLEMS OF GENDARMERIE IN TERMS MANPOWER, MONEY ETD. HE SAID HE HAD OPPOSED SENDING GENDARMERIE TO SOUTH UNPROTECTED BY ARMY AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT PERFORM FUNCTION WHICH WAS PROPERLY THE ARMY'S. THIS IS IN PART UNHAPPY RESULT OF OUR INABILITY TO AID POLICE FORCES. PARKER

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